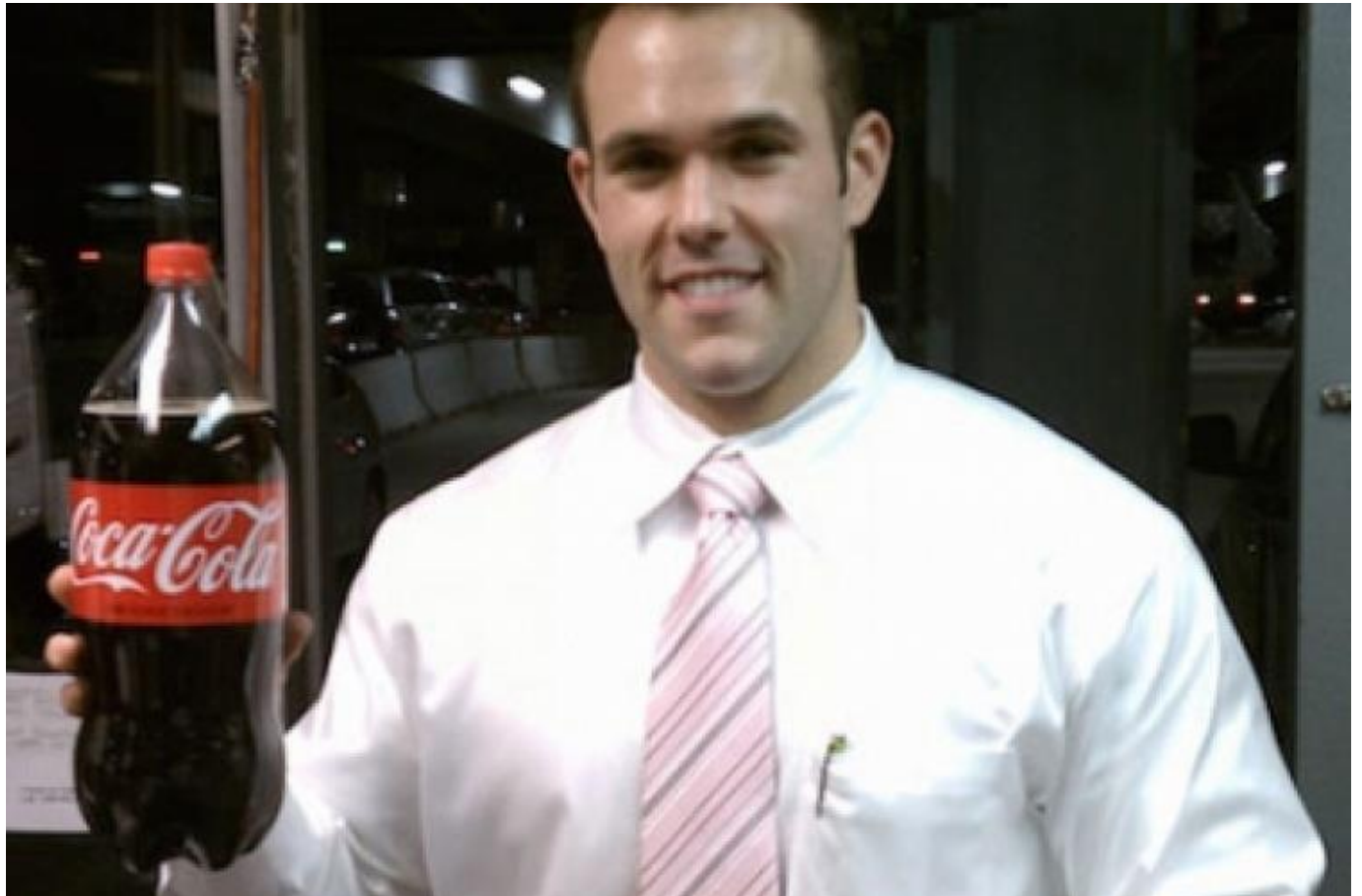


Life in Reverse: Full-time Work to Full-time Pre-dental Student

Friday, November 7, 2014

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You're not Jim Halpert, and you don't work at Dunder Mifflin Paper Co., but like him, you know you don't see yourself retiring doing the same job you're doing now. In fact, you

know that you're not even in an *industry* you want to retire in. You may like the people around you, you may like the paycheck, you may even like the job itself, but there's an itch left unscratched. And, let's face it, nobody wants an itch they can't scratch.

I decided to leave sales and management to pursue dentistry, and if you find yourself contemplating a similar choice, or if you recently made a similar choice, listen up! The biggest question anybody faces in this situation is... *how do I do it?*

Make no mistake, stopping full-time work to go back to school full-time is certainly a radical change. This change is further amplified by the fact that you're not just going back to school – you're going back to school with the intent of getting into dental school! It won't be easy, but fear not; as someone who pulled this complete 180° and left a well-paid, full-time position to go back to school full-time, I know exactly what it takes, and I'm here to offer guidance. I'm well on my way to creating a strong dental school application, and I'm here to help you do the same. Here is a blueprint for what you will need **to know** and what you will need **to do** in order to make your transition effective:

To know:

- You can do this. You are capable of making it work. Read those two sentences again. If you can't fully internalize this step, don't bother with the rest. You have to believe that you can do it, because you can.
- Know that dentistry is really what you want. Going back to school to take organic chemistry, physics and the likes is a real challenge – one that will test your patience and resolve. If you do it on a whim and without being certain of what you want out of it, you might lose your gumption and end up doing little more than growing your student debt (please, like anybody needs that).
- Know what path you want to take – as a non-traditional student, there are 2 or 3-year pre-dental paths – check out ASDA's "[Guide to Applying to Dental School for Non-traditional Students](#)".
- Know where you want to take your dental school pre-requisites – you will have many options ranging from state schools, community colleges, etc.
- Know what the pre-requisites are for dental school, especially the schools you plan on applying to. If you take some courses at a community college only to find out that the school you're applying to doesn't accept community college credits for those courses, you're up you-know-what-creek without a you-know-what.

To do:

- Make a detailed plan. This includes making a course timeline, an application timeline, DAT timeline, a budget, and identifying the essential extracurriculars you need to include on your d-school app (like shadow hours, community service, etc.).
- Join ASDA and get involved in every way possible. Seriously, you can do it right now by going to asdanet.org/joinnow. It's the best \$63 I've spent this year – even better than Amazon Student. Now, that's saying something.
- Make time for friends and family. Just because you've decided to go back to school doesn't mean that you can forget the really important people in your life.

- Commit to your plan and follow it.

As you can see, once you have a really good vision of what you want your future to be and what your path will look like, it's all about committing to your plan and following it. That's it. If you are 100% committed and you have a strong plan, all you have to do is, to borrow Nike's slogan, *JUST DO IT*.

Any questions or comments, feel free to e-mail me! Rynstaples@gmail.com

If you're a pre-dental and haven't joined ASDA yet, now is the time! You'll have access to valuable member benefits including ASDA's print publications, discounts on Crack the DAT and Chad's Videos and more. Most importantly, you'll belong to the largest student run dental organization in the United States. [Click here](#) to join ASDA.

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